

# Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 23, Issue 4

August 2017

## General Meetings of the BHHS

in February to May and September to November are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month, beginning at 8 pm in the Strabane Chapel Hall 29 Strabane Avenue, Mont Albert North. In the winter months—June, July and August—meetings are held in Meeting Room 1 of Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Road, beginning at 2 pm.

Members and friends are always welcome.

Enquiries:

**03 9285 4808**

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## For your diary

Details of the next meeting of the Society are as follows:

**Please note the change of day, time and venue for the winter months.** The general meetings for June, July and August will be held on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Road, Meeting Room 1, 1st Floor (accessible by lift or stairs).

## Sunday, 20 August 2017

Guest speaker: **Anna Burke, former Federal Member for Chisholm.** Anna will speak on her time in politics as a member of Federal Parliament, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. A member of the Australian Labor Party, she represented the Electoral Division of Chisholm from her election in 1998 until her retirement in 2016. Anna is now a member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

(For details relating to the other events confirmed to date for this year, and other forthcoming events, see page 3.)

Founded in 1963, the Box Hill Historical Society is affiliated with the

- \* Royal Historical Society of Victoria
- \* Association of Eastern Historical Societies

and is a

Place of Secondary Deposit for the Public Record Office of Victoria

The Society can now be found on the Web at:

**[www.boxhillhistoricalsociety.com.au](http://www.boxhillhistoricalsociety.com.au)**

(or use a search engine)

and you can now email us at:

**[boxhillhistory@gmail.com](mailto:boxhillhistory@gmail.com)**

**Follow us on Facebook at**

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## President's report — August 2017

In something of an experiment, the Society's two most recent meetings have been held at a different time and place to our usual arrangements. To make it more attractive for our members to attend meetings during the winter months, we have opted for daytime meetings, in the more centrally-placed venue of Box Hill Library. Attendances at these meetings have been encouraging, although it must be said that the speakers at the June meeting brought a significant proportion of the audience with them. Notwithstanding, the Committee is pleased with the general acceptance of the changes, and also with the new venue.

Members may be aware that, for the first time, the Box Hill Town Hall was open to the public as a venue in the recent 'Melbourne Open House' programme. The Society took the opportunity to open the Heritage Centre, with great success. Our Secretary realised the potential of the occasion and marshalled a band of volunteers to be on hand, not only in our rooms, but also in the old Council chamber and the Hub foyer. There was a steady flow of visitors to see what the Society had to offer, which resulted in three new members being signed up, and many of our publications sold.

Along with a number of other Society members, I attended the launch recently of a book on the history of the Box Hill electric supply. The work is by John Wilkins, a former Chief Engineer of the department, and was launched by Tom Thorpe OAM.

Following successful completion of the research and writing of this history, Mr Wilkins kindly donated to the Society, three boxes of records relating to the Electric Department and its operation.

Gary Presland  
*President*

## Association of Eastern Historical Societies

The Association held its bi-annual conference on 24 June at the Karralyka Centre in Ringwood. The theme of the conference was 'Avoiding and surviving disasters', something that all societies such as this one should bear in mind.

Society members who attended the conference included Robyn Doble, John Barnao, Philip Widmer, and Judith Eadon.

The next meeting of the Association will be on Saturday 9 September beginning at 1.30 and hosted by Sherbrooke Foothills Historical Society, This will be the AEHS 2017 Annual General Meeting.

## *Suggestions?*

The Committee welcomes suggestions from members for events to be held by the Box Hill Historical Society.

If you have any ideas for topics for talks or speakers, tours, or exhibition topics, please contact a member of the Committee.

## *Contributions?*

A newsletter like this one functions best and is of most use and interest to members when it contains a wide range of pertinent information for its readers. To assist this exercise, the Editor is always looking for contributions about the Society, from our own members. If you have something you would like to include in an issue of the Newsletter—a photograph, some information you'd like to share—don't be shy; contact the Editor.

## *Mission Statement*

The Box Hill Historical Society seeks to collect, preserve, facilitate access, research and communicate items that reflect life in and the development of Box Hill and district.

## *Geographical area of interest*

The Collection is relevant to the suburbs of Box Hill, Box Hill North, Box Hill South, Mont Albert, Mont Albert North, Bennettswood and the parts of Burwood and Surrey Hills, which fall within the City of Whitehorse.

## Forthcoming Society events

**Please note the change of day, time and venue for the winter months.** The Annual General Meeting, on Sunday 20 August, will be held from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at **Box Hill Library**, 1040 Whitehorse Road, in Meeting Room 1, 1st Floor (accessible by lift or stairs).

Other meetings listed below will be held in Strabane Hall in Strabane Ave, Mont Albert North.

### Thursday 21 September, 2017

Guest Speaker: **Judith Eadon: 'Kerrimuir Primary School'**

Judith was one of the first students to attend Kerrimuir Primary School when it opened in 1959. Her parents were involved as office-bearers on the school committee and her mother was school secretary for many years. Judith will share her memories of those early schooldays.

### Thursday 19 October 2017

Guest Speaker: **Cr. Tina Liu - 'Growing up in Box Hill'**

### Thursday 16 November 2017

Guest Speaker: **Jim Claven - 'Lemnos, the other side of Gallipoli'**

## 2017 Annual General Meeting

Members are reminded that the 53rd Annual General Meeting of the Box Hill Historical Society Inc. will be held on **Sunday, 20 August 2016**, beginning at 2 p.m., in the Box Hill Library meeting room, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill.

Business will include –

- Acceptance of Minutes of 2016 AGM;
- Annual Reports 2017;
- Financial Statements;
- Election of office bearers, committee members, and the Audit Committee;
- Any other business of which written notice has been received.

A nomination form for positions of office bearers and committee was enclosed with the previous issue (June) of the newsletter. Members are asked to please give consideration to nominating for the committee of the society.

Helen Harris OAM  
**Hon. Secretary**

## Electronic copy of the Newsletter

Members are reminded that this Newsletter can be received in digital form, as an attachment to an email. When received in this way rather than through surface mail, the Society benefits by reducing the cost of both producing and posting the Newsletter. In addition, less paper will be used, which of course is good for the environment.

If you are interested in having your Newsletter mailed electronically, please send an email to that effect, addressed to the Editor at [presland.gary@gmail.com](mailto:presland.gary@gmail.com).

Alternatively you can email the Society at:  
[boxhillhistory@gmail.com](mailto:boxhillhistory@gmail.com)

## New members

The Committee is pleased to welcome the following individuals who have recently joined the Society:

Lucinda Adams;  
Shane Hübner;  
Fred van Gorp.

(Lucinda is not an entirely 'new' member, having rejoined after a brief lapse, but we welcome her nonetheless.)

We hope that the association between the Society and these new members will be long and mutually beneficial.

## Do you know.....?

Where, and when, was the first pedestrian overpass erected in Box Hill?

The answer will be provided in the next issue of the newsletter.

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## Recent speakers

**Kay Edwards** and **Glenys Grant OAM**, members of the **'bestchance organisation's heritage committee**, spoke to the **June general meeting** (held in the Box Hill Library theatrette) about their history book *From Burwood Boys' Home to bestchance – 120 years*.

The history was written 'in house' with the encouragement of Society member Marjorie Morgan, and consists of a chronology and a monograph about Robert Campbell Edward's work, previously written by Ken Masterton in 2007. The chronology drew on annual reports and newsletters and a budget was provided from the Campbell Edwards Trust. The aim in the new book was to collect stories from past residents and others involved.

Kay Edwards, a former school principal, has been involved with the Cheshire School, which provides 12 month special intervention programs for junior primary school children, while her husband Gary Edwards is a member of the Board. Glenys Grant has been a member of the Board since 1977 but first met Burwood Boys in 1972, when she and her husband volunteered as holiday hosts. They went on to be foster parents, including caring for four children over a long term.

An advertisement in a Church of Christ newsletter in 1895 promotes the Burwood Boys' Home to serve the needs of children (at the time only boys). The name changed to Burwood Children's Homes in 1976 after a trial period of including girls. Institutional care ceased in 1986 and the organisation moved to a new site in Glen Waverley where they operated a Children's Centre as the Child and Family Centre Network (CFCN). In 2006 the CFCN adopted the working name 'bestchance – Family Care' to better reflect their current activities.

The Burwood Boys' Home was the vision of tea merchant (of Ensign Tea), Robert Campbell Edwards. He arrived in Australia with his family in 1877, aged 17. During the 1890s he took advantage of low land prices to purchase real estate; this included the site in Warrigal Road, at a price of £500 including some construction costs. Campbell Edwards envisaged a 'home for waifs living on the street, a home for neglected, homeless or fatherless boys', aiming in his words to give them the 'best chance'.

The Boys' Home was supported by donations, and by volunteers in sporting and construction activities (e.g. Jaycees built their swimming pool), with a scout troop and on excursions. For some time there was a dedicated school on site but later children attended local schools including those in Wattle Park, Jordanville, Box Hill and Burwood.

In the early days the boys attended school in the morning and worked on the farm in the afternoon. W. Hawkins, a horticulturalist, was the first superintendent. The farm produced fruit and vegetables for local use and some for sale. The boys were also provided with some recreation, including swimming and excursions. There were no government grants, the only support was donations.

During WWII the boys dug air raid trenches, and the Gordon Boys arrived, as their home was taken over by the military. Alf Wignall, a school teacher, was appointed superintendent. A new school was constructed, administration moved on site and accommodation made more home-like. Between 1960 and 1972 the cottage system was adopted and greater volunteer involvement encouraged. Glenys Grant, along with four other adults was a volunteer in 1972 taking 14 boys into the city to see the Myer's Christmas windows: five boys were 'lost' but with advice were found in Darrell Lea – the staff gave the boys their unpaid-for 'selection' as a Christmas donation.

During the 1970s BCH became leaders in child care under board president Hector Davis and the supervision of Colin Tutchell and Matron Betty Skidmore. The inclusion of girls brought an additional expense with the need for additional bathrooms and living rooms. Kemp Lodge was established on site to provide transitional care to independent living. The Palms, a hostel in Hawthorn, also provided accommodation. Professional development training was also being provided for staff.

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## Recent speakers (cont.)

In 1981 Goulburn Valley Family Care was established with the support of BCH to allow children requiring care to stay in their own region. The state government ceased providing funds for residential care in 1985 with a move to foster care and adoption. The Children's Family Care Network (CFCN) was established in Glen Waverley and now provides services including Family Day Care, Kindergarten, Foster Care, Berengarra School for adolescents, and vocational training programs. Local resident Kevin Feeney has been CEO since 2011.

The **July general meeting** began with an impromptu interview with longstanding resident and meeting visitor Dick Logan. This was followed after some technical difficulties by the showing of some **videos from the Society's collection**. These included Norman Carter's film of swimming at Surrey Dive; the closing down of the Box Hill Gasworks; and some 'now and then' scenes of Box Hill compiled by Bob, Harold and Gary Bruce. Cousins Bob and Gary were in the audience and related that their grandfather bought land in Lexton Road in 1912, where they lived until 1964. They took the early scenes on Standard 8 film and covered many landmarks and events around Box Hill, including the floats in an early Whitehorse Festival parade and the official opening of the Shell Blackburn service station.

**William R Orange**

### Stanley Bruce McKenzie OAM 1932 – May 2017

Former member **Bruce McKenzie** was probably best known for his proprietorship of Tait's Corner Stores. He was invited to join the business in 1952 by his uncle, James Tait, who had suffered a heart attack. The business expanded over time to three stores, but from 1995 until about 2011 operated from a home base, supplying principally curtains and blinds. He won several PWD contracts to supply blinds for the Education Department. The shop also sold drapery and sewing requisites.

Not so well-known to the general public were Bruce's activities with Rotary, an organisation he joined as a charter member of the Box Hill club in 1957 on the invitation of Horace Bedggood. He served in leadership roles at local, district and national levels, and on an international Rotaract committee. He was passionate about his Rotary involvement, in particular Australian Rotary Health where he supported the program to eradicate polio, and a fund for SIDS research. On one occasion he addressed an international Rotary meeting on why women shouldn't be admitted to Rotary; he later recanted. Amongst other Rotary awards, Bruce was made a Paul Harris Fellow.

Bruce spent his early years in Springfield (between Romsey and Kilmore) before moving to Barloa Road Mont Albert. He attended Mont Albert Central School and then Scotch College, where he was more interested in sport (including cricket and athletics, especially hurdling) and the school cadets than in study. On leaving school he obtained a junior cadetship at Myer's Stores in 1951, followed by a period of National Service, during which he was a member of the Coronation contingent to England in 1953. He married his childhood sweetheart Lorraine in 1955 and lived in Churchill Street, where they raised their three children. Bruce was a keen sportsman and played for Bennettswood Cricket club. He was also a passionate member of Hawthorn Football Club. In later times he bought some property at Yea and enjoyed developing a small farm. Bruce was proud of his family, took an interest in family and friends, but liked to do things his own way. He was always optimistic and enjoyed the challenges of life.

**William R Orange**

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## Archivist's update

Well, this is my last Archivist's Update. After 10 years as the Society's Honorary Archivist, I am retiring. I have been a committee member since 2004 and a Tuesday volunteer since 2000. It seems like a very long time when I see those numbers and I will not be nominating at the AGM as to be appointed Archivist one must be a committee member. I will continue as a volunteer so that I can complete some outstanding jobs and projects.

During my time as the Archivist a group of truly fantastic volunteers has formed who have contributed lots of time in so many ways, assisting in the management of the Society's collection. Jennifer Elder; Peter Galley; Vicki Goodall; and Kathleen Newman have been Tuesday regulars for longer than me. Likewise, until recently, Graeme Reynolds. They have been joined by Barbara Lovell; Rohan Gibbs; Colin Barraclough; Grace Swiney; Brian Shields; Beth Davis; Lorraine Taylor; and Gill Madden. They have been a lovely bunch of people to work with and I thank them all most sincerely for their commitment to local history.

The Acquisitions Committee is a vital aspect of our collection management and I thank Vicki Goodall, Marjorie Morgan OAM, Kathleen Newman and Margaret Wood who have considered and made judgement on thousands of items over the decade.

One final 'thank you' to Janet Galley OAM whose support over the decade is much appreciated.

Robyn Doble  
**Hon. Archivist**

## From newspapers of the past

*The following items from a variety of newspaper of past years have been provided by Society Secretary Helen Harris OAM.*

*Observer* 31 January 1962

### **Bank celebrates its jubilee tomorrow**

The Box Hill Branch of the State Savings Bank of Victoria will celebrate its jubilee tomorrow (February 1). It was one of 37 city and country branches opened in 1912 – the bank's greatest year of expansion. On opening day at Box Hill, 52 accounts were registered. Today almost 20,000 people have more than £2,600,000 to their credit ... Many Box Hill residents who opened accounts at the State Savings Bank in 1912 are still active depositors. They include Miss Gladys Petherick, of 524 Station Street, who has account No 3. A total of 521 accounts were opened in the first month of business ... Three other important developments occurred within the bank in 1912. All branches administered by the commissioners were designated under the title of 'The State Savings Bank of Victoria'. Previously, each branch had taken its name from the locality – for instance, the Box Hill Savings Bank. The introduction of the famous school bank and deposit stock systems were other noteworthy innovations.

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## From newspapers of the past

*Eastern Times* 5 October 1961

### **Tom Kelly Wins U.N. Marathon**

Tom Kelly, from Box Hill, won the United Nations International marathon at Seoul, South Korea, last week. He won convincingly in the time of 2 hours 40 minutes over the particularly tough course of 26 miles from Ichon to Seoul – the route taken by General MacArthur when he led the United Nations troops to liberate Seoul.

Each nation which assisted in the liberation of South Korea was invited to send a representative to compete in this race, and the field consisted of USA, South Africa, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Australia. Tom Kelly is a member of the Box Hill Amateur Athletic Club which has the largest membership of any athletic club in Australia, having almost 300 members.

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*Eastern Times* 15 November 1962

The SEC will reduce the dust nuisance at its Carrington Road briquette depot, Box Hill Council was told last week. Mr G.O. Reid, Minister for Electrical Works and Box Hill's State Member, told Council that the SEC would spray water and extend the galvanized-iron wall, facing Carrington Road, to the ground to prevent dust escaping into the street. The Council's building surveyor, Mr L.H. Berry, said that an extension of the galvanized iron wall to ground level would be contrary to a Council by-law, 'The wall would have to be made of brick to comply'.



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*Reporter* 19 March 1964

On Labor Day, 9th March, Box Hill City Band took part in the 10th annual Moomba procession in Melbourne. The Victorian Bands League, in conjunction with the Moomba Committee, awarded the trophy for the best band in the procession to Box Hill. Last Saturday, 14th March, as in previous years, the band marched in the St Patrick's Day procession in Melbourne. The citizens of Box Hill will have the opportunity to hear their own band next Saturday, 21st March, when the band will present a recital at the Horticultural Society's exhibition in the Box Hill Town Hall.

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*The Australian Municipal Journal* September 1973

Cr Esther Poelman has been elected Mayor of Box Hill City. Being the only woman ever to have served on the Box Hill Council she naturally enjoys the distinction of being the first woman mayor. Cr Poelman was elected to Box Hill Council five years ago and was returned unopposed three years later. By a happy coincidence Cr Poelman will be the first Mayor to wear the new Box Hill mayoral robe made of fine royal blue wool trimmed with palomino mink. Former Box Hill mayors have worn the traditional black robes. Cr Poelman believes that women should stand for council if they have something to contribute. 'I don't judge people by whether they are male or female, but by what they have to contribute' she commented.

**Box Hill Historical Society Inc.**  
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**Suite 7, 27 Bank Street, Box Hill.**  
**(Town Hall Hub, rear Box Hill Town Hall)**  
**Hours: 11-4, Tuesdays; otherwise, by appointment**

**President: Dr Gary Presland**  
**Vice-President: William Orange**  
**Secretary: Helen Harris OAM**  
**Treasurer: John Barnao**  
**Committee: Dr Colin Barraclough, Robyn Doble,**  
**Judith Eadon, Philip Widmer**



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**Box Hill Historical  
Society  
Newsletter**



**Box Hill Historical Society Inc.**  
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**CITY OF**



**WHITEHORSE**

Box Hill Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the City of Whitehorse for its support with grants, discounts on hall hire, concessional use of premises in the Box Hill Town Hall and its willing assistance with our exhibitions in the Box Hill Town Hall Art Space.